

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Deborah Lopez
Illinois DCFS
312-937-0050

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

*Illinois DCFS kicks off monthlong observance with statewide
virtual training and events in Carterville and Edwardsville*

(CHICAGO, Ill) – The public is invited to join the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, Hospital Sisters Health System, the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children, elected officials, child welfare stakeholders and more for a month-long observance to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness messages and promote prevention efforts across the country during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

This year's theme, **Growing Better Together**, is a call to action to support each other and focus on the positive environment we all need to survive and thrive.

"The past two years have been extremely difficult for all of us. While our schools, businesses, shops and restaurants were closing, reducing hours or 'going remote' the support services we provided to families in crisis became even more important as parents lost jobs, children faced disruptions to a stable schedule and the pandemic weighed heavily on the mental health of so many families. Through it all we never wavered from our mission to strengthen families and keep children safe," said Illinois DCFS Director Marc D. Smith. "We found new ways to support the families we serve. We finalized adoptions over Zoom; created a new mobile app so our youth in care can stay connected to their loved ones, caseworker and support system; and overhauled our online child abuse and neglect reporting system to make it more user-friendly and easier for anyone to report suspected abuse or neglect and keep children safer. And now, we are coming out of the pandemic stronger and more resilient than ever."

"Our world has changed. Everyone talks about getting back to normal, but the truth is we have a new normal. This new normal includes realizing that things can change in an instant, understanding that we have a responsibility to protect each other and knowing that we are all in this together," said Denise McCaffrey, executive director of Prevent Child Abuse Illinois. "Child abuse prevention needs to



be part of this new normal. April is the perfect time to spread the message that all children deserve great childhoods, and we all have a role to play in keeping children safe.”

To heighten awareness, Illinois DCFS will host events across the state in observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month. All events are open to the public. All Illinoisans can get involved and show their commitment to ending child abuse by wearing blue on April 1 and posting pictures on social media with the hashtags #GreatChildhoods and #GoBlueIllinois.

Upcoming Events:

Friday, April 1, 2022

Carterville kickoff event

1 p.m.

John A. Logan College (Building H Atrium)

700 Logan College Drive, Carterville

Watch the livestream: www.facebook.com/preventchildabuseillinois/

Friday, April 1, 2022

Edwardsville kickoff event

10 a.m.

Madison County Government Building

157 N. Main Street, Edwardsville

Watch the livestream: <http://www.riverbender.com/video/live/details.cfm?id=1284>

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Statewide virtual kickoff and training featuring trauma survivor and international trauma-informed care expert Tonier Cain

10 a.m.

Register here: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HrdUMO-FSOyngajtbWPWPg

Friday, April 1 through Saturday, April 30, 2022

Aurora Art Exhibit

Paramount School of the Arts

20 S. Stolp Ave., Aurora

The exhibit will feature artwork created by children who are currently in care or have been in care, students, local artists and individuals who care about children.

For a full calendar of Child Abuse Prevention Month awareness activities occurring statewide throughout the month of April, click [here](#).

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, visit the DCFS Online Reporting System at <https://dcfsonlinereporting.dcf.illinois.gov/>. The user-friendly online system is an easy and convenient way for anyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect using any mobile device. In an emergency, call the DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873). Calls and online reports may be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.

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